Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 BRUSSE 12083 091758Z
14
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 SAJ-01 IO-13 EB-07 TRSE-00 /080 W
---------- 062120
R 091633Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8582
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
USMISSION USEC BRUSSELS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRUSSELS 12083

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT BE
SUBJ: TINDEMANS EXECUTES MINOR CABINET RESHUFFLE

REF: BRUSSELS 11549

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS RESHUFFLES TAILEND OF HIS CABINET TO ADJUST GOVERNMENT PROFILE TO NOVEMBER BREAKUP OF THE SMALL COALITION PARTY, WALLOON RALLY. TO HOLD RW IN COALITION, TINDEMANS IS FORCED TO DROP LEADER OF RW BREAKAWAY FACTION, INSTITUTIONAL REFORM MINISTER FRANCOIS PERIN. GOVERNMENT SURVIVES CONFIDENCE VOTE IN PARLIAMENT AFTER RESHUFFLE IS ANNOUNCED. TINDEMANS' SUCCESSFUL MANEUVERING TO PRESERVE HIS MAJORITY STRAINS THE FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK OF BELGIAN POLITICAL SYSTEM JUST ABOUT TO THE LIMIT, BUT HE AND HIS FLEMISH INNER CIRCLE STILL HOPE TO KEEP PRESENT GOVERNMENT ALIVE UNTIL 1978 NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

1. THE BREAKUP OF THE SMALL COALITION PARTY, WALLOON RALLY, IN NOVEMBER (REFTEL) EXERTED HEAVY-ULTIMATELY INTOLERABLE - PRESSURE UPON TINDEMANS' DELICATELY BALANCED GOVERNMENT. UNDER THREAT OF DESERTION OF THE COALITION BY RW DEPUTIES LOYAL TO PARTY PRESIDENT GENDEBIEN (WHICH WOULD HAVE BROUGHT DOWN THE 30-MONTH-OLD TINDEMANS GOVERNMENT) THE PRIME MINISTER BOWED TO POLITICAL REALITY THIS WEEK.

2. SEVERAL DAYS OF BACKROOM MANEUVERING PRECEDED THE CABINET SHUFFLE ANNOUNCED DECEMBER 9. TINDEMANS REPORTEDLY TRIED TO GET AWAY WITH A MINI-SHAKEUP OF HIS 29-MAN CABINET AND TO PIN DOWN THE RW IN WRITING TO SUPPORT HIS GOVERNMENT UNTIL THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN SPRING, 1978. IN THE END HE HAD TO SACRIFICE PERIN, A KEY FRANCOPHONE PERSONALITY IN THE TINDEMANS CABINET AND SETTLE FOR A GENERAL PLEDGE OF RW SUPPORT. IT WAS PERIN WHO LED THE ANTI-GENDEBIEN WALKOUT FROM RW (OSTENSIBLY IN PROTEST AGAINST THE LATER'S LEFTIST SYMPATHIES) AND LED HIS FOLLOWERS INTO MERGER WITH THE FRANCOPHONE LIBERAL PARTY UNDER THE NEW NAME, WALLOON PARTY OF REFORM AND LIBERTY (PRLW).

3. THE RESHUFFLE FORMULA WHICH FINALLY PROVED VIABLE LEFT INTACT THE DOMINANT CHRISTIAN PARTY (BOTH FLEMISH AND FRANCOPHONE DIVISIONS) REPRESENTATION IN THE CABINET (16 MEMBERS), AS WELL AS THAT OF THE FLEMISH LIBERAL PARTY (SIX MEMBERS). NONE OF THE KEY MINISTRIES (FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENSE, FINANCE, ECONOMY, INTERIOR) WAS AFFECTED BY THE RESHUFFLE.

4. CHANGES CENTERED EXCLUSIVELY ON THE SEVEN MINISTRIES AND STATE SECRETARYSHIPS HELD BY THE RW BEFORE ITS BREAKUP (FOUR SEATS) AND THE OLD FRANCOPHONE LIBERAL PARTY (THREE SEATS). HENCEFORTH THERE WILL BE TWO RW MINISTERS IN THE CABINET (GENDEBIEN LOYALIST ROBERT MOREAU (MINISTER FOR PENSIONS) AND SENATOR PIERRE BERTRAND, A NEWCOMER WHO WILL BE ASSOCIATE MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. THE FORMER LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PLP (NOW PRLW) IS STRENGTHENED BY THE ADHESION OF TWO FORMER RW CABINET MEMBERS, ETIENNE KNOOPS AND JEAN GOL. KNOOPS REPLACES FOREIGN TRADE MINISTER MICHEL TOUSSAINT, WHO MOVES INTO PERIN'S VACATED MINISTRY, INSTITUTIONAL REFORM.

5. IN ORDER TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CONSTITUTION AND OF BELGIUM'S COMPLEX PARTY POLITICS,

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

TINDEMANS WAS FORCED TO ELEVATE FOUR OF HIS EIGHT
STATE SECRETARIES TO FULL MINISTERIAL STATUS
MOREAU, KNOOPS, STATE SECRETARY FOR THE BUDGET
GASTON GEENS AND STATE SECRETARY FOR ADMINISTRATION
ANDRE KEMPINAIRE. A NEW PORTFOLIA - MINISTER OF PENSIONS --
WAS CREATED FOR MOREAU. THUS THE NEW CABINET WILL
NUMBER 25 MINISTERS AND FOUR STATE SECRETARIES. WITH
PERIN DROPPING OUT AND BERTRAND COMING IN, IT WILL
REMAIN UNCHANGED IN SIZE - 29.

6. NO ISSUES OF PUBLIC POLICY WERE AT ISSUE IN THIS
WEEK'S MINI-CRISIS. THE OPPOSITION SOCIALIST PARTY
CHARGED THE TINDEMANS GOVERNMENT WITH "POLITICAL
IMMORALITY" IN TRYING TO HANG ON AND PRESSURED RW
DEPUTIES TO JOIN THEM IN BRINGING DOWN THE GOVERNMENT.
GENDEBIEN MANAGED TO HOLD HIS FRACTIOUS FORCES IN LINE.
IN A CONFIDENCE VOTE IN LATE EVENING DECEMBER 9,
FORCED BY THE SOCIALISTS, TINDEMANS SURVIVED HANDILY,
110-90 IN THE KEY LOWER HOUSE WITH 12 DEPUTIES ABSENT
OR ABSTAINING.

BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

7. COMMENT: TINDEMANS WAS CLEARLY DRIVEN HARDER AGAINST
THE WALL THAN HE COUNTED ON WHEN HE UNDERTOOK THE
NECESSARY ADJUSTMENTS TO THE BREAKUP OF HIS
EXASPERATING COALITION PARTNER, RW. THE NEW CABINET
LINEUP HAS ASPECTS BIZARRE EVEN FOR BELGIAN POLITICS --
TWO MINISTERS FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND, IN EFFECT,
TWO MINISTERS OF FINANCE (FINANCE MINISTER DECLERCQ AND
BUDGET MINISTER GEENS). IT IS UNQUESTIONABLY A
WEAKER STRUCTURE THAN WHAT IT REPLACED.

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

8. THE SOCIALIST CHARGE THAT THE TINDEMANS GOVERNMENT
IS NOW GLUED TOGETHER BY PURE PRAGMATISM WITHOUT
COHESION ON POLICY OR GOALS CONTAINS A LARGE ELEMENT
OF TRUTH. THERE WILL CERTAINLY BE RENEWED EFFORTS TO
TOPPLE TINDEMANS AFTER THE 1977 BUDGET IS VOTED AND
THE HOLIDAY SEASON IS PAST. THE BETTING IN THE POLITICAL
MARKETPLACE ARE THAT THIS RICKETY COALITION CANNOT
HANG TOGETHER MUCH LONGER. BUT THE HARD CORE OF THE
TINDEMANS GOVERNMENT - FLEMISH CHRISTIANS AND FLEMISH
LIBERALS - IS DETERMINED TO HANG ON ANOTHER YEAR.
AND THERE IS NO ONE TODAY TO SAY THEM NAY.FIRESTONE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

NNN

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, GOVERNMENT REFORM, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BRUSSE12083
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760456-0035
From: BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761256/aaaabvvj.tel
Line Count: 165
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 BRUSSELS 11549
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <05 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <06 APR 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TINDEMANS EXECUTES MINOR CABINET RESHUFFLE
TAGS: PINT, BE, (TINDEMANS, LEO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006